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ABSTRACT

This paper documents the background of a curriculum framework, the Foundation Areas of Learning, for children from birth to age 3 in South Australia. The paper examines some of the dilemmas in creating such a framework and some of the rewards as the system coped with the challenge of including its youngest learners in a clearly articulated curriculum framework for learners aged birth to 18 while striving to maintain the integrity of quality programs for this age group. Foundation Areas of Learning was designed to: (1) assist child care professionals in observing children and using the information in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs; (2) identify and articulate a range of developmental outcomes for children aged birth to 3 in center-based care; (3) define best practice and the competencies required by child care professionals to achieve the desired outcomes for young children; (4) encourage child care professionals to reflect on their beliefs and practices; (5) provide a framework for working in partnership with families and other caregivers and for providing them with detailed and specific feedback on each child's individual development; (6) provide caregivers with a tool for self-assessment; (7) support caregivers in the clear articulation of the importance of the first 3 years of life; and (8) promote the South Australia Department of Education Training and Employment's policies of social justice and reflect current understanding of cultural diversity, gender, access and equity, and the needs of Aboriginal children and children with additional needs. After discussing the context of early childhood education in South Australia and the development of Foundation Areas of Learning, including a trial implementation in 31 child care centers, the paper elaborates on the development of the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability framework for learners, aged birth to 18. Issues encountered in trying to design one framework which can provide continuity for the learner and which can allow for particular needs at identified points along the way are discussed. The complete Foundation Areas of Learning framework is included. (EV)

ED 433 939

YOUNGEST LEARNERS FIRST: ONE SYSTEM'S EXPERIENCE IN PLANNING A CURRICULUM CONTINUUM FOR LEARNERS FROM BIRTH TO EIGHTEEN YEARS

I wish to acknowledge the work of Professor Marjory Ebbeck, Pam Winter, Elspeth Harley and child care practitioners in 31 centres in South Australia for their commitment and determination in the development of Foundation Areas of Learning birth - three.

Introduction

Curriculum for the under threes is an area of controversy and potential difficulty. When we consider traditional notions of curriculum and what we now know about the powerful learning that can occur at this early age, we are faced with some real dilemmas which some fear could lead us down paths we may not wish to go.

This paper documents a journey of travelling down the path of a curriculum framework for children from birth to three years of age. It looks at some of the dilemmas in doing this and some of the rewards as one system grapples with the challenge of including its youngest learners in a clearly articulated curriculum framework for learners from birth to eighteen, yet strives to maintain the integrity of quality programs for this age group.

This conference has as its theme: *How does early childhood education lead to lifelong learning*? It includes as one of its aims: *To encourage the clear articulation and communication between research and practice in the early years*. That is really what this paper is about. Often the academic and the education administrator set out from similar starting points with common goals but somewhere along the journey different pathways are taken. Sometimes we get to similar destinations. On other occasions we do not end up in the same place. What I want to do is to describe a shared journey where academics, practitioners, providers and administrators are travelling together to improve the quality of learning and development for our youngest learners. We haven't yet covered the full course. We have a map with some main roads marked out, but we are still drawing in the highways and byways.

The paper describes the process for developing a birth to three framework, the Foundation Areas of Learning that has been designed to:

- assist child care professionals in observing children and use the information in planning, implementing and evaluating programs
- identify and articulate a range of developmental outcomes for children aged from birth to 3 years in centre based care
- define best practice and the competencies required by child care professionals to achieve the desired outcomes for young children
- encourage child care professionals to reflect on their beliefs and practices
- provide a framework for working in partnership with families and other caregivers, and for providing them with detailed and specific feedback on each child's individual development
- provide caregivers with a tool for self - assessment
- support caregivers in the clear articulation of the importance of the first three years of life
- promote the Department's policies of social justice and reflect current understanding of cultural diversity, gender, access and equity and the needs of Aboriginal children and children with additional needs.

The paper then goes on to elaborate upon a new challenge - the development of the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability framework for learners from birth to eighteen years of age. Issues encountered in trying to design one framework which can provide continuity for the learner and which can allow for the particular needs at identified points along the way are discussed.

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Context

South Australia is one of the smallest of the eight states and territories within Australia. With a population of approximately 1.4million and an aging population, one million of the total population live in the capital city of Adelaide. The state is characterised by very few regional centres, only two of which have populations in excess of 20,000. There are many very small rural and isolated communities.

In a country of 19 million people, South Australia is a very small, but very significant player in the early childhood field.

However it is a player with some unique issues that impact on the lives of young children. High levels of unemployment especially amongst youth and low average income are the reality for a large proportion of the population. Approximately 21% of the population are born overseas and therefore many have no extended family nearby. Approximately 1.5% of the population is indigenous. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998)

The multilingual, multicultural makeup of the community provides a richness of experiences and also demands that early childhood practitioners know how to work towards maintaining children's home languages and know about a diversity of child rearing practices. After English, Italian, Greek Cantonese Arabic and Vietnamese are the main languages spoken. Altogether in Australia there are about 200 languages spoken, 48 of which are indigenous languages.

Children's Services in South Australia

As in many countries there is a complex multi model approach to service delivery for young children and their families. Parents find themselves often confronted with having to put together a patchwork of child care arrangement especially for very young children. Historically there has been a shortage of places for under 2's in long day care although the supply is higher than in some other states. In small rural communities it is often difficult to maintain children's services because of the high costs involved. A recent model in South Australia has been the development of integrated services that combine child care and preschool largely in those rural areas.

Added to the issue of cost is the supply of highly trained staff, often a particular difficulty in rural areas. Preservice training occurs through two avenues - A four year university degree in Early Childhood Education (birth - eight) or through a diploma vocational education course offered by registered training organisations. Cutting costs due to recent changes in funding arrangements has often amounted to the demise of ongoing professional development, ultimately affecting the quality of care.

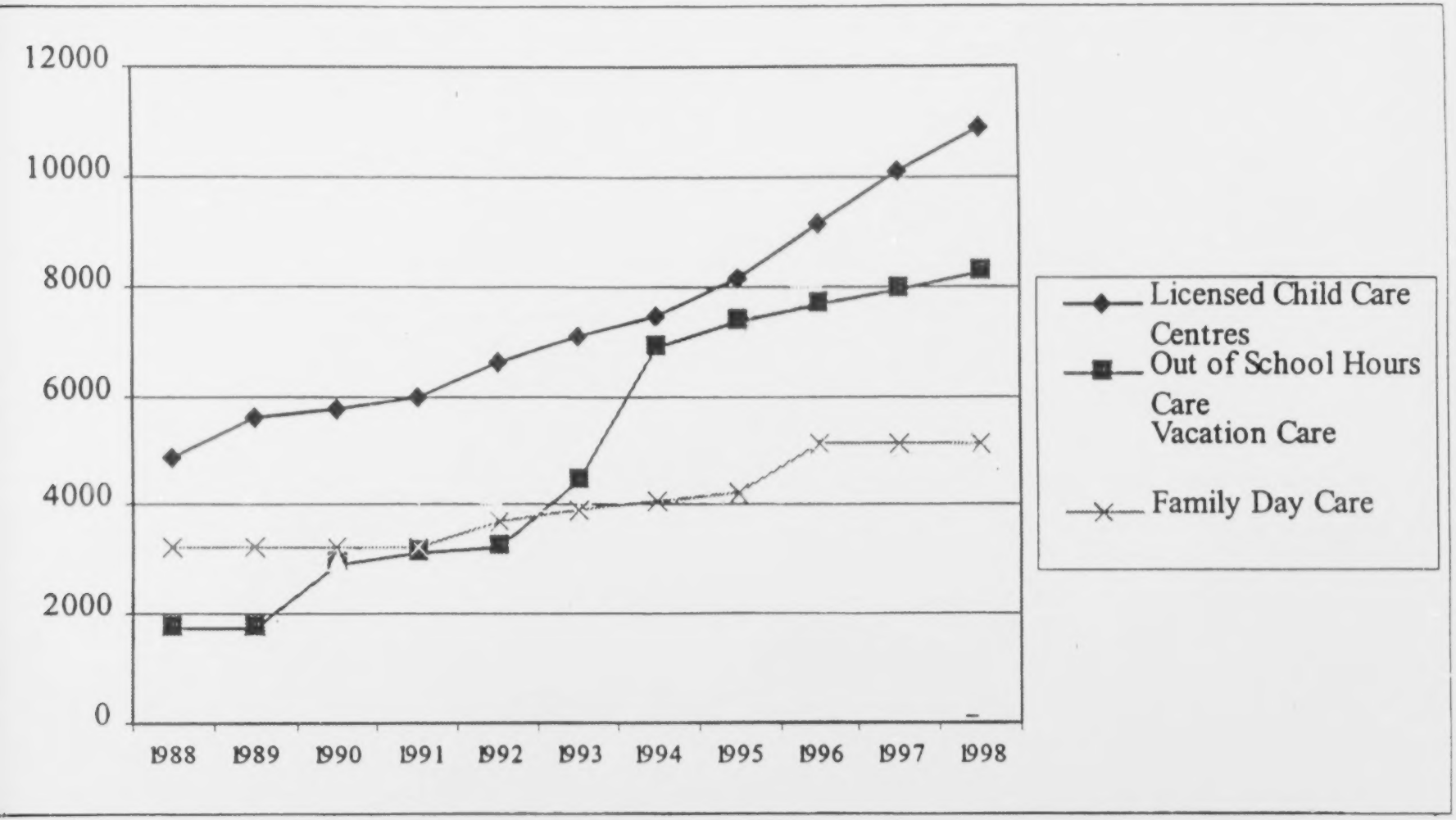
One of the features of the children's services system in South Australia is its growth in the past eight years. The following show the extent of the growth.

Number of services	June 1990	June 1998
Government preschools	420	407
Playcentres	21	36
Occasional care in preschools	14	65
Licensed child care centres	152	237
Family Day Care schemes	15	12
Out of school hours care services	91	181
Vacation care services	76	151
Mobile toy libraries	14	17
Total	803	1106

Table 1: number of children's services 1990,1998. (SA)

(Department of Education Training and Employment 1998)

Figure 1 Growth in number of child care places in South Australia, 1988-1998



A decline in numbers of four year olds in the past four years has meant the closure of some smaller preschools and the recent changes in funding arrangements by the Commonwealth government have led to the closure of a number of child care centres. While approximately 95% of children attend preschool programs for four-year-olds there is a much smaller percentage using child care services. The level of unemployment and lack of family financial resources have meant that some families who would like to use child care centres cannot afford to do so.

The South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment has responsibility for the planning and delivery of early childhood and school aged services, such as preschool, child care, family day care, toy libraries, playgroups, playcentres, and outside school hours care, and for the licensing of child care centres and baby sitting agencies and the approval of family day careproviders. The department has responsibility for care and education from birth to adulthood - lifelong learning. Included also as part of its responsibilities are employment, youth and training.

This range of responsibilities puts the department in a unique position to bring consistency to the existing diversity and to assist in the improvement of quality for all young children who access programs. These opportunities are limited however because funding responsibilities are divided between the State (whose major responsibility is educational services) and the Commonwealth (whose major responsibility is child care services)

Underpinning program quality in child care centres are two major legislative bases. Regulation provides the bottom line of minimum standards while the national Quality Improvement and Accreditation System for long day care centres builds on regulations, pays attention to quality practices and sets standards for improvement.

For example the regulations under the Children's Services Act specify that the centre must have a curriculum policy and implementation strategies in the following areas

- Statement of philosophy
- parent and staff participation in the development of the centre curriculum
- Individual developmental needs of children
- Cultural relevance
- Child self reliance self esteem
- Children with disabilities
- Gender equity
- Excursions

The Quality Improvement and Accreditation System is more specific and directive in that principle 16, for example, states

The program is planned to reflect the centre's philosophy and goals

and defines high quality as indicated by

- *staff make regular observations of all children's learning and development keeping well detailed records of how they are progressing against stated goals and using this information in further planning*
- *staff use strategies that significantly influence children's learning and development.*
- *There is continuous monitoring and evaluation of the program in consultation with parents.*

(National Childcare Accreditation Council 1993)

The advent of the accreditation system along with the publication of the Foundation Areas of Learning for children from 3-5 stimulated an interest in practice improvement in child care settings. Questions were raised about programs for the under 3's. Practitioners were aware that they were watering down programs for older children and that was not what they wanted to do. People were wanting a way of planning for the youngest learners that built upon the unique characteristics of under threes as a group and could meet individual needs. They wanted a guide to help them to build the curriculum out of the caregiving practices that they felt were right for children of this age.

The State government, in recognition of the importance of the early years in terms of lifelong learning, implemented its Early Years Strategy and a decision was made to develop a curriculum framework for children from birth to three in centre based care.

Foundation Areas of Learning

Foundation Areas of Learning is not a core curriculum nor a syllabus but, rather, a curriculum framework. It is a document that individual practitioners and teams will expand upon to suit their children, their centres, and their community.

In the development of the Foundation Areas of Learning for 3 to 5 year olds, curriculum is defined as *"all of the interactions, experiences and routines that are part of each child's day" (DECS, 1996:13)*

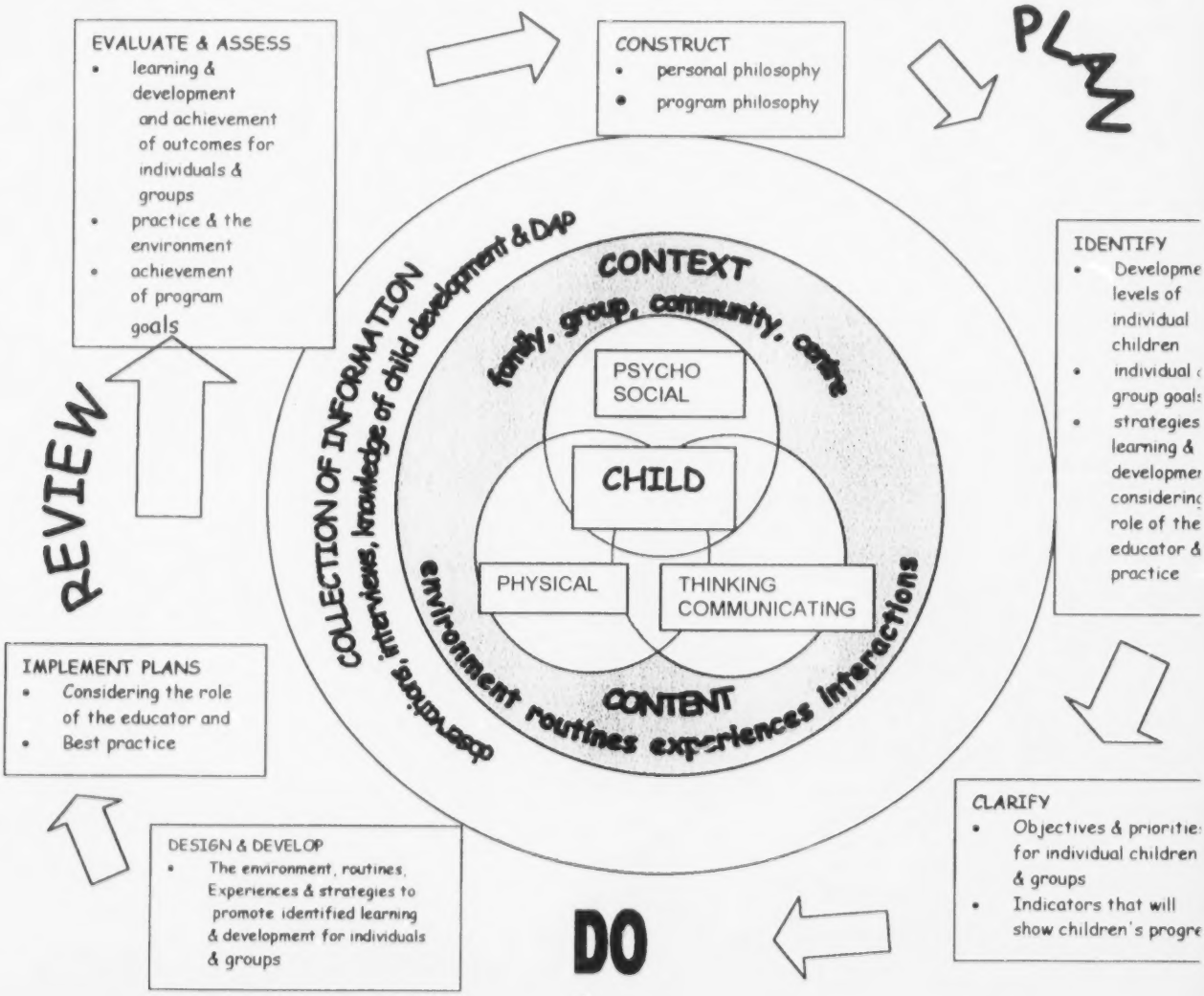
Interactions: are all of the interpersonal communications that promote learning, caring relationships and positive self-esteem.

Experiences: are the results of opportunities that consolidate learning and provide new exciting challenges; they can be active or passive, planned or spontaneous.

Routines: are the regular activities associated with the comfort, health and well being of the children, routines promote a sense of belonging and security when they are sensitive and responsive to the needs of each child.

Curriculum is constructed and delivered within the concept of the three 'Cs' of early childhood - the child, the context and the content.

An outcomes planning model, (Table 1), adapted from Bruce (1991 in DECS 1996) has been used in the birth to three framework to explicate all the important elements of the curriculum cycle identified in the framework.


EVALUATE & ASSESS
• learning & development and achievement of outcomes for individuals & groups
• practice & the environment
• achievement of program goals
CONSTRUCT
• personal philosophy
• program philosophy
PLAN
IDENTIFY
• Developme levels of individual children
• individual group goal
• strategies learning & developme considerin role of the educator & practice
CLARIFY
• Objectives & priorities for individual children & groups
• Indicators that will show children's progre
DO
DESIGN & DEVELOP
• The environment, routines, Experiences & strategies to promote identified learning & development for individuals & groups
IMPLEMENT PLANS
• Considering the role of the educator and
• Best practice
REVIEW
COLLECTION OF INFORMATION observations, interviews, knowledge of child development & DAP
CONTEXT
family, group, community, centre
PSYCHO SOCIAL
CHILD
PHYSICAL
THINKING COMMUNICATING
CONTENT
environment routines experiences interactions

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Great importance is placed on a play based curriculum and the development of a positive self concept for each child, as this is seen to lay the foundation for learning. The framework uses three foundation areas of learning:

The development of the psychosocial self: which includes the development of trust, secure attachment, self concept, identity (including cultural, racial and gender), autonomy, self-regulatory behaviour, warm relationships and social connections with others.

The development of the physical self: which includes perceptual motor and sensory development, health and hygiene, gross and fine motor development, self help and care routines.

The development of the thinking and communicating self: which includes language, early literacy and numeracy, creativity, abilities and dispositions to play, to plan, reason, explore, experiment, communicate, persist and cope with transitions.

The framework is arranged with the following components:

Development, Skills and Attitudes: which describe what could be reasonably expected of children within the age range. This section provides a significant amount of the curriculum content.

The Role of the Early Childhood Educator: which identifies the important attitudinal as well as practical aspects of the caring behaviour of adults, which is seen as fundamental to children's success as learners.

Best Practice: which requires a sound understanding of child development and practice and describes experiences through which children may achieve

Outcomes with Indicators:
Outcomes identify the observable developmental milestones and learnings that are part of the development of each child. They are the results of sound planning and practice that take into consideration individual needs and potential.
Indicators are the elements of the broader outcomes. They are observable signs that progressive development is occurring. The indicators are neither prescriptions nor prescriptive, but they can been used in a diagnostic way when planning individualised programs for young children. They represent the stepping off point for the next aspect of development.

In constructing the framework a range of theoretical perspectives were drawn upon. Child development with reference to the NAEYC 12 Principles of Child Development and Learning (Bredekamp and Copple 1997: 10-13) was emphasised. In particular, dynamic systems theory and its implications for physical development was considered. Berk and Greenspan caused us to focus on attachment and the need for very young children to develop a sense of trust in his/her caregiver. This led to the promotion of a primary caregiver model, something that a number of centres had difficulty implementing. However once it was tried the centres remarked on the difference it made in providing a settled and relaxed atmosphere.

It was important to base the framework on current knowledge of child development within a socio-cultural context. Vygotsky's work and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory gave a foundation for this and provided an approach which is consistent with departmental policies and approaches to emphasise inclusivity and reflect the needs of different groups within the community. While the framework highlights to the tremendous growth that occurs in the early period of life, especially in relation to the development of the brain, it was very important to focus on the caregiving practices because

It is through responsive interactions with families and a few other special caregivers that infants develop a sense of a safe interesting and orderly world where they are understood and their actions bring pleasure to themselves and others."

Lally, 1998:11

Development of the framework

The department has a defined process for the development of curriculum initiatives, underpinned by a strong belief that the success of any curriculum innovation will depend, largely, on how well it is introduced. The process for the birth - three curriculum project included the following steps:

- Clearly identifying the needs for the project
- establishing a Steering/Reference Group comprising key stakeholders to guide the project. For the birth - three project this included professional expertise from the community, childcare practitioners and the teaching institutions.
- conducting a generative conference with practitioners
- developing a trialing strategy
- establishing a small writing team
- engaging an expert as the major writer
- completing a first draft and circulating it to both targeted and general audiences for critical analysis and feedback. This included cross curricular groups (Gender Equity, Equity, Aboriginal Education, Multiculturalism and Children with Special Needs)
- implementing the trial, gathering and analysing feedback and redrafting the framework
- providing professional development to explore the theories and approaches of the framework

and still to be completed...

- professional publication of the document
- access to training for all staff with the implementation of the framework.

The trial

31 childcare centres were selected to participate in the trial of the framework through an Expression of Interest process. Participating centres included

- 16 community based child care centres
- 4 private centres
- 5 integrated services
- 5 preschools with occasional care
- 1 community occasional care

The trial commenced with a training day, with release time for 2 qualified staff from each of the participating centres. Curriculum Officers from the Department and staff from the Lady Gowrie Child Centre (Resource and Advisory Program) provided support for staff during the ten week trial. Support included telephone consultations via a Help Line, site visits, newsletters, circulation of professional readings, site to site visits, group meetings and professional development sessions.

100% of the questionnaires, distributed at the initial training day were completed at the end of the trial. 44 responses were received from the 31 centres as 13 centres trialed the framework in two rooms.

The practitioners who trialed the framework were extremely positive about its effectiveness. Their responses are shown in Figure 3.

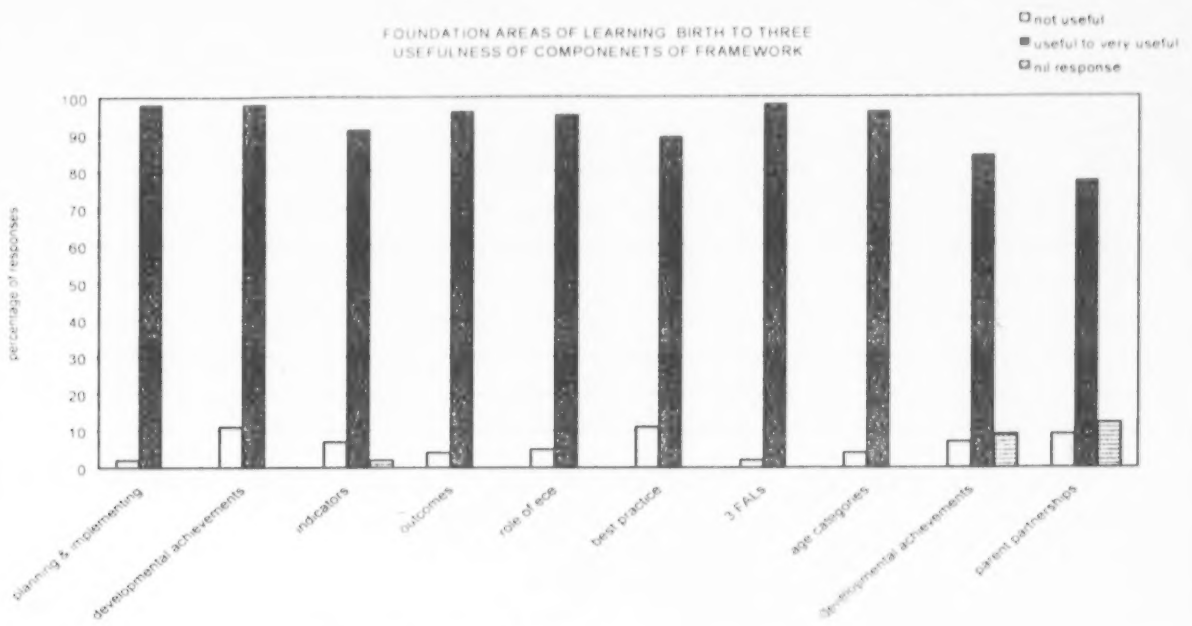

Figure 3 Responses to trial of Foundation Areas of Learning

Practitioners identified the strengths of the framework as

- providing strength and direction
- sound, relevant and appropriate
- providing a strong focus on individuals
- easy to use
- challenging
- time saving
- comprehensive having everything in one document
- encouraging reflection
- supporting staff to talk with parents about their child's development, strengthened these partnerships
- improving curriculum decision making

One team leader from a trial centre summed up her feedback with

"It significantly reduced stress on staff as they moved away from activities towards a more natural and relaxed program. Staff now feel more secure that children are being well cared for and their needs are being met."

Reflections of Practitioners.

Twelve months after the trial, the participating centres have reflected on their practices and the difference the framework has made. Staff from the Lady Gowrie Child Centre have identified the challenges the framework presented to a number of centres when aiming for a high quality program for infants and toddlers. One of the great strengths of the framework has been its power to support practitioners to reflect on, and change their practices. A number of staff say that they are also much more able to articulate why they are working in a particular way and can share better information with parents about their child's development.

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Taking it on from birth to three - where are we going next?

A recent policy direction within the Department of Education Training and Employment has caused us to take an exciting and challenging new turn - the development of the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability framework - a framework for learners from birth to eighteen.

The new framework builds on the existing frameworks and aims to provide continuity of learning at the same time as retaining the program integrity at a local level and in an age appropriate way. While national requirements must guide the curriculum in the compulsory years of schooling in the eight areas of study a decision has been made that a group of essential learnings will form the basis of the curriculum and will be clearly visible in the learning for all. A set of new national goals for schooling places new importance on areas such as the development of analysis and problem solving skills, the qualities of self confidence, active and informed citizenship, creativity and stewardship of the natural environment. The essential leanings will address these goals but will also recognise the existing focus of the early years curriculum.

The essential learnings aim to provide learners with

- skills and dispositions to be active informed citizens
- capacities and design skills to develop new ways of thinking, solving problems and making decisions for a socially just society
- ability to make informed choices about their lives and their learning.

The essential learnings are about values, dispositions, skills and understandings that are considered crucial in the education and development of all learners in our care. They recognise that development of these take place in every context of a learner's life.

Work is *in progress*.
At this point in time the essential learnings encompass

- identities
- interdependence
- thinking
- communications
- futures.

The framework will describe the entitlement for all learners and will consist of

- curriculum scope
- indicative outcomes and standards
- accountability mechanisms.

Initial issues have arisen as the compulsory schooling sector determines how to incorporate national requirements such as literacy and numeracy benchmarks. The first curriculum standard is identified at approximately seven years of age. (year2)

Lively discussions have occurred about the notion of standards and benchmarks as part of the deliberations. There has been much debate about the ways of organising curriculum with suggestions for total consistency giving way to the preservation of diversity within a united framework. There is a growing recognition that in the very early years the curriculum comes from the child, is centred on interactions, and is built around the caregiving practices.

The writing phase is about to begin. It will be carried out by a consortium of academics and practitioners. Already the advice that is being provided from a range of reference groups is reflecting aspects of strong practice already evident in the early years. Comment has included the need to build on from what the child already knows and can do and the important place of play and self directed activity in the curriculum. The Foundation Areas of Learning birth to three will provide a strong base from which to build the learning of all

children as they progress through the range of educational services that are available to them, and through lifelong learning.

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Gerry Mullearn
31.8.99.

Development, Skills & Attitudes

Children will have the opportunity to develop:

For babies

sensory awareness
observation skills - eyes follow movement
hearing acuity - tracking and identifying sources of sound
hand-eye co-ordination
rolling and rotating movements
kicking movements
crawling patterns
the ability to sit independently
strength to pull self up to standing posture
grasping skills
walking skills
scooting movements

For toddlers (as above and)

specific sensory awareness and integration (sight, sound, touch
hand-eye co-ordination
purposeful kicking movements
side-stepping skills
walking skills
climbing skills
independence in feeding self
balancing skills
ability to stack blocks
hand-to-hand co-ordination
push / pull-along skills
balancing skills - rides on toys
independence in dressing / undressing
spatial orientation (demonstrate spatial awareness)
rhythmic movements to music or sound
fine motor control (pincer grip, tears paper, turns pages)
increasing independence in toileting

For 2 - 3 year olds (cumulative and)

sensory awareness and preferences
refined hand-eye co-ordination
climbing skills
hand-to-hand co-ordination
increasing ability to sequence movements and behaviours into co-ordinated patterns
steering behaviours (demonstrate spatial awareness - manoeuvring through space)
independence in toileting

Role of Early Childhood Educator

The Early Childhood Educator will:

- have knowledge and understanding of children's physical development
- have knowledge and understanding of the role of play in physical development
- provide a physically safe environment that invites active exploration and manipulation
- provide interactions and experiences that encourage curiosity and problem solving through physical activity
- observe, record, interpret and plan for the physical development of individual children
- arrange the environment to challenge children at different levels of physical competence
- encourage physical competence through active engagement with children and equipment
- support children in learning a range of physical skills and techniques
- model and teach sound nutrition and health practices
- positively acknowledge children's attempts and achievements in physical activities
- respond to children in a relaxed manner
- spend unhurried time with individual children
- incorporate learning experiences into routines
- observe, interpret and implement children's individual feeding, care and sleep routines and rituals
- actively seek information from the parent about a child's temperament, needs, interests and preferences
- allow children time to attempt personal care tasks and encourage children's efforts
- encourage children to feel positive about their own efforts
- be sensitive and respond to the child's expression of hunger, thirst and need for rest
- spend significant time interacting with children at ground level (eg. on the carpet, in the sandpit)
- set the environment to provide a variety of experiences to foster sensory exploration and development

Best Practice

Children will have the opportunity to experience:

- being sung to
- being danced with
- being carried in arms
- turn-taking games
- walking with hands held
- being talked to
- laughter / a sense of fun
- consistent caregivers
- flexible routines that are incorporated into the program
- opportunities to help with routine tasks (eg setting tables)
- an environment which promotes exploration, curiosity and discovery
- the extension of their developing physical competencies
- practice in, and opportunities to build upon their emerging physical skills
- sensory activities: paint, water, sand, clay and mud
- different nutritious foods for tasting at meal and snack times
- choices
- time and space and adult support to accept challenges
- individual routines and rituals which are understood, respected and unhurried
- families who are involved in planning care at the centre
- educators who model hygiene and health practices

Outcomes for Children

Children will develop:

1. Muscle strength and control and independent locomotion
2. A sense of balance and body in space
3. Healthy eating patterns, rest, relaxation and sleep routines and rituals
4. Increasing independence in personal care
5. Their 5 senses to interpret their world

Indicators

Outcome 1: Children will demonstrate developing muscle strength and control and independent locomotion when they

- sit, climb, crawl, pull up to stand, walk, push / pull objects, kick
- independent locomotion
- climb up steps, onto equipment
- run, stop, start
- use pincer grip
- hold own cup
- scribble
- draw a vertical line
- manage simple puzzles and other manipulative equipment
- pour water without spilling
- balance objects (eg. block building)
- unwrap parcels
- tear paper, scrunch paper

Outcome 2: Children will demonstrate a developing sense of balance and body in space when they

- move around furniture/environment safely
- move to music and develops simple rhythmic patterns
- walk along plank on ground
- spin around to make self dizzy
- explore space with body (eg. crawl through tunnel, rolling)
- jump, jump off objects
- use equipment creatively with adult support (eg. design own obstacle course)
- show enjoyment in movement
- climb over/under/between
- slide
- swing

Outcome 3: Children have healthy eating patterns, rest, relaxation and sleep routines and rituals when they

- express hunger and thirst
- enjoy food
- try different food
- try to feed self
- indicate need for rest
- settle with own ritual/routine
- engage in self comforting routines
- respond to calming techniques, music etc

Outcome 4: Children move towards independence in personal care when they

- feed self
- help with dressing
- take off own clothes
- wash, dry face and hands
- are aware of elimination
- use toilet or potty with help
- put things in own bag, get own things from bag
- recognise own clothes / possessions
- indicate toileting need
- use toilet independently
- can take off own clothes

Outcome 5: Children will demonstrate development of their five senses and use them to interpret their world when they

- are curious about sensory stimulants
- explore with touch, mouth, eyes, ears, hands, feet, nose
- seeks to satisfy sensory needs
- respond to smells
- recognise familiar sounds
- respond to unfamiliar sounds
- recognise familiar objects
- inquire about unfamiliar objects
- demonstrate taste preferences
- show preferences for textures
- use sensory vocabulary, eg hot, soft, loud, dark

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TABLE 2 FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING 0-3 ~ DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL SELF

Development, Skills & Attitudes

Children will have the opportunity to develop:

For babies:

- secure attachments
- trust in adults
- trust in familiar environment
- a sense of self (through sensitive & responsive caring and stimulation eg. cuddled, rocked, stroked, cooing)
- a sense of being special (valued as an individual)
- awareness of their body (through sensory stimulation and exploration)
- self identity---become aware of self
- a sense of order and belonging (through consistent people and predictable routines

For toddlers in addition to the above:

- confidence to initiate verbal, non-verbal and social interplay (eg peek a boo)
- confident behaviour
- preferences in their needs and wants
- a sense of being special (valued as an individual)
- awareness of their body (through sensory stimulation and exploration)
- a sense of autonomy (through making choices and attempting to do things for themselves)
- self motivation (drive to do things for themselves)
- self identity
- positive self esteem
- strategies for dealing with their own frustrations
- the ability to cope with minor change
- a sense of fun
- a sense of awe and wonder in their world

For 2 - 3 year olds in addition to the above:

- self motivation
- self identity
-
- imaginative behaviour including role play and pretend
- strategies for dealing with their own frustrations
- self-regulating behaviour and control of impulses
- an understanding of cause and effect (their actions will elicit a response)
- warm, trusting relationships with other children and adults
- empathy and compassion
- concentration

Role of the Early Childhood Educator

The Early Childhood Educator will:

- respect individual temperaments, preferences and thresholds
- develop meaningful relationships with children
- provide a warm, safe, facilitating environment
- be aware of their own feelings, values and attitudes and their impact on children
- understand the role of transitional objects in emotional development
- understand the role of ritual in children's emotional development
- assist children in managing changes and transitions - small and large
- understand object permanence development
- understand child-stranger anxiety and separation anxiety
- understand the development of fears for toddlers
- understand the role of play in the development of the child's sense of self
- provide adequate uninterrupted time for children to develop their play
- behave in a way that promotes trust and security and respond to the child's emotional state
- respond consistently, positively and quickly to children's needs
- be sensitive and perceptive to cues and changes in children
- respect children as people (not talking about them inappropriately)
- be realistic in their expectations of children's developmental norms
- be available and accessible to children (working on the child's level, including sitting on the floor)
- establish consistent limits and guidelines for children's behaviour and play
- be perceptive and sensitive in supporting children in seeking answers
- accept children's individual personality including their temperament
- accept and assist children to manage frustration
- provide opportunities for children to succeed
- model appropriate emotional responses to other adults
- respect individual children by giving eye contact and undivided attention
- listen to children attentively
- value children's emerging sense of responsibility
- ensure that children are not criticised, shamed or made to feel guilty
- respond to child's discomfort swiftly
- scaffold the child's interactions to promote accomplishment
- facilitate and support children's play with others
- observe, record, interpret and plan for children's development
- engage in turn-taking games
- consistently interpret and respond to boys' and girls' behaviour and achievements
- respect the diversity in children's learning styles
- avoid inaccurate and stereotypic resources
- enrich and extend children's play
- provide time, props and resources for children's play
- provide opportunities and time for repetition, practice, development of mastery and a sense of satisfaction
- work with parents and families to develop common understandings about optimal experiences for early learning and development

Best Practice

Children will have the opportunity to experience:

- individualised programs
- individual or small groups
- care in a primary group with a primary caregiver
- opportunities to experience object permanence exploration
- support at separation time from parent
- caregivers on the floor with the children
- programs that reflect the input of their parent's
- privacy and security through the provision of their own sleeping space, bedding and comfort toys
- prolonged conversations and proactive interactions
- being held, cuddled, nurtured, rocked if congruent with the child's needs and interests
- their physical needs being met
- daily one-to-one feeding for babies and, where appropriate, for toddlers
- opportunities to feed independently at their own pace
- choices in play materials and experiences
- caregiver acknowledgment of their mastery and need for independence
- acknowledgment and respect for their likes and dislikes
- support in the development of their assertiveness skills
- recognition of their changing emotions
- time and support to settle into routines and ongoing experiences
- acceptance and pride in their efforts
- opportunities for the development of their imaginary play
- opportunities to imitate and role play
- resources that reflect and support the diversity in family backgrounds & styles
- a structure and planned settling-in period
- uninterrupted time to observe, explore and play
- a balance of images of women and men doing jobs in and outside the home
- child-size mirrors
- images of differently-abled and elderly people of various backgrounds doing a comprehensive range of activities
- carers who are predictable in their responses
- consistent positive childrearing practices
- programs adjusted to the particular needs of the individual child
- constancy of caregiver, minimal staff changes

• Outcomes for Children

Children will develop:

Indicators

1. a sense of self

Outcome 1: Children will demonstrate a developing sense of self when they:

- Recognise own name
- Begin to control their environment eg cry for attention
- Recognise self in mirror, photo
- Display self conscious emotions
- Are intrigued with other people's names
- describe personal characteristics eg hair colour & texture, physical abilities, gender, anatomy
- Direct actions of others, asserts self
- Self regulate some behaviours
- Begin to self evaluate (eg good/bad)
- Begin to use 'me', 'you' 'I'

2. A sense of trust

Outcome 2: Children will show a developing sense of trust when they:

- recognise familiar adults
- smile, coo, gurgle
- gesture towards an adult
- greet familiar adults
- approach familiar adults
- approach new situations with confidence
- respond to and initiate interactions
- explore the environment and be familiar with trusted adults
- express their needs and wants
- settle into routines
- are comfortable in the presence of their primary caregiver in unfamiliar environments
- feed easily, comfortably, autonomously
- sleep deeply
- are relaxed and comfortable with toilet routines
- play relaxed when a caregiver leaves the room

3. Autonomous behaviour

Outcome 3: Children will develop autonomous behaviour when they:

- attempt to do things for themselves
- practice skills spontaneously
- choose adults they want to be with
- make choices of experiences and equipment
- express their needs and wants
- demonstrate self-calming techniques (eg thumb-sucking, hugging toy)
- assert their rights (eg. saying "no", tantrums are age-appropriate)
- demonstrate frustration at their own limitations
- acquire age-appropriate bowel and bladder control
- display boisterous behaviour when pursuing personal needs / interests
- show an understanding of ownership
- begin to occupy themselves
- begin to see themselves as a separate identity

4. Secure attachments outside the family

Outcome 4: Secure attachments outside the family are evident when children:

- appear comfortable when left with a familiar adult
- explore their environment constructively
- demonstrate affection with their primary caregiver
- name significant adults, children and pets (home and centre environment)
- engage in some peer play
- seek the person they are attached to
- show stranger anxiety with unknown persons
- demonstrate the ability to leave their primary caregiver, explore and return (secure base behaviour)

5. An appreciation of the beginnings of social connections with others

Outcome 5: Children demonstrate an appreciation of the beginnings of social connections with others when they:

- recognise familiar people
- actively explore faces
- respond to cues from adults and peers
- observe others
- mimic behaviour of others
- initiate interactions
- play alongside others
- name others in group
- recognise others through mirror images and pictures
- distinguish strangers and enquiries about them
- demonstrate affection to adults and children and respond to affection from others
- sometimes join in what others are doing

TABLE 2 CONTINUED

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TABLE 6B: FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING 0-3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE THINKING AND COMMUNICATING SELF - LANGUAGE

Development, Skills and Attitudes

Children will have the opportunity to:

For babies:

- make distinct separate sounds
- babble
- repeat vowel sounds
- imitate sounds
- interact by repeating sound after adult
- use and react to intonation
- laugh
- turn to mention of own name
- become quiet upon visual or voice contact with people
- begin to seek attention and contact with people
- respond to speech by looking at speaker
- respond with gesture
- replicate sounds from memory
- demand by pointing/vocalising

For toddlers in addition to the above

- respond to mention of own name
- use simple words
- understand prepositions - in, under, over
- understand simple instructions, phrases
- label familiar objects
- refer to self by name
- understand question forms - where, when, why
- enjoy simple stories, rhymes, songs
- speak in simple phrases

For 2 - 3 year olds in addition to above

- speak in sentences
- use plurals, pronouns (me, I, you)
- attempt to describe actions
- develop an understanding of the function of printed material

Role of the Early Childhood Educator

The Early Childhood Educator will:

- engage with children in a positive manner throughout the day
- respond to children's emerging language (eg. through peek-a-boo games), repeat sounds, babbling, cooing, turn-taking (eg playing language games, repeat names)
- interact positively with children ensuring adult's verbal and non-verbal messages are consistent
- be proactive in promoting children's emerging language
- support the development of children's first language
- use reflective techniques to promote language development,
- listen respectfully to the child and provide opportunity for the child to be listened to
- plan language experiences to occur throughout the day including routine times (eg. feeding, nappy change)
- provide resources and conversations that link home life with centre life (eg. photo album, security toys)
- model appropriate language and structures
- model descriptive language
- provide a wide range of resources and experiences that promote language development (eg. books, photos, posters, music, pictures, tapes, visits and visitors)
- read books to the children
- draw children's attention to print, symbols, pictures
- provide writing and drawing materials
- give simple clear instructions - appropriate to each child's level of understanding
- provide opportunities to describe, recall, recite and retell experiences and stories
- accept and support children's attempts in role play
- provide models, props and resources for children to engage in role play
- support and foster children's efforts to communicate with each other
- provide opportunities for children to play alone, next to or with another child
- understand and support family expectations regarding bi-lingualism

Best Practice

Children will have the opportunity to experience

- Extensive, positive one-to-one interactions
- Early childhood educators who are aware of the importance of their role in the development of children's language
- the valuing of their emerging language
- early childhood educators who spend time with them, listening and conversing respectfully and providing appropriate language models
- early childhood educators who extend knowledge from their current understanding
- support for their verbal and non-verbal language
- language integrated into all their daily experience including routines
- quality language including stories, rhymes, songs, finger plays, poetry, humour, jokes
- sensory stimulation including music, dance, drama, art
- the legitimisation of feelings
- authentic responses and expression
- situations and events in which they can develop and practice skills of recollection
- a range of quality literature which is culturally appropriate and gender inclusive
- adult models including visitors and real life experiences (eg father bathing baby)
- time, space, props and adult support for imitation and role play
- language which helps to make sense of their world
- early childhood educators who use positive language/literature
- adults who record events and experiences special to them (eg. scribing on paintings, photo albums, posters)
- early childhood educators who model positive conflict resolution strategies and who support them in managing their own conflicts
- working alone, in pairs or in small groups
- small group participation in the course of the day
- repetition for practice and pleasure
- adequate materials so that they do not have to share (can work alongside each other without frustration)
- discussion and problem solving in creative ways
- a range of environments outside the centre
- a print-rich environment

Outcomes for Children		Indicators
	Children will:	
1	Begin to understand the role of language	*Outcome 1: Children demonstrate an understanding of the role of language when they* • become quiet upon visual and voice contact with people • begin to seek attention and contact with people • give/respond to cues • begin to use language conventions (eg. turn-taking, plurals, applying rules) • talk with increasing vocabulary • sometimes modifies talk, listening and play for different situations
2	Communicate using verbal and non-verbal language	*Outcome 2: Children communicate using verbal/non-verbal language when they* • use gestures and vocalisations (eg. waving, crying) • use communication purposefully across a range of experiences (eg. express needs, greet, question, express emotions, request) • facial expressions, intonation and body language • persist in making self heard and understood • plays with language
3	Develop listening behaviours	*Outcome 3: Children demonstrate listening behaviours when they* • stay quiet when another person vocalises • take turns • maintain eye contact, facial expression • follow instructions • respond to questions • mimics • ask questions for clarification • use non-verbal signals to indicate understanding (eg. head nodding) • identify familiar environmental sounds
4	Develop early literacy skills, respond positively to a range of literature and show interest in print	*Outcome 4: Children demonstrate early literacy skills, respond positively to a range of literature and show interest in print when they* • listen and respond positively to read/told stories, rhymes, chants, jingles, poems and songs • requests stories, songs, rhymes • interact with texts • pretend to read, 'read' pictures • choose to look at a book and other printed material and ask for a story to be read • recognise some environmental print (eg. MACDONALDS) • make connections between familiar texts and own experience • look at picture books independently • identify familiar objects in pictures • recognise a familiar product by its label • demonstrates book knowledge (eg hold a book up the right way, turn the pages) • tells own story for scribing • scribbles
5	Begin to demonstrate prosocial interactions including empathy, conflict resolution	*Outcome 5: Children begin to demonstrate prosocial interactions when they* • greet, farewell others • say own name, recognise photo of self and family • smile at faces, react to difference, to emotional tones of voices • show awareness of social approval/disapproval • enjoy getting attention and creating social effects • join in social opportunities • show empathy for others • use others' names • approach others to engage in common activity • initiate social interactions • choose to help in routines (eg. set table) • co-operate with others • join small groups (eg. lunch) • negotiate and manage conflict
6	Remember, recall and retell experiences and information	*Outcome 6: Children remember, recall, retell experiences / information when they* • recognise familiar objects • find and replace objects from where they belong • anticipate known endings (eg. rhymes, storylines) • recite jingles, poems, rhymes • talk about recent events • retell / act out familiar stories • describe familiar places / locations in the centre, and community including family events
7	Begin to play with others - moving towards co-operative play	*Outcome 7: Children begin to play with others when they* • observe others • play alongside others • interact and use common resources • engage in role play • assume a role in a play episode with others • give and take direction with others

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		• recognise gender differences (boys/girls) • begin to co-operate • recognise and talk about difference in physical characteristics • ask about others' physical characteristics
6	A sense of their own competence and ability to regulate their world	***Outcome 6: Children show a developing sense of their own competence and capacity to regulate their world when they*** • explore and experiment with objects and people in their environment • accept challenges and attempt new experiences • show pride in achievements • persevere with tasks and behaviours • ask for help/refuse help • resist doing something they don't want to do • demonstrate a skill to peers or adults • defend the self when they feel under threat • demonstrate initiative • employ own comforting techniques (eg ask for dummy) • demonstrate assertive behaviour • make choices about people, food and equipment • recognise and claim personal possessions
7	Competence to engage in role play	*Children will **demonstrate competence to engage in role play** when they* • explore their environment • engage in solitary play • interact with objects and people • project roles into play materials (eg playdough becomes cake) • imitate • observe and play along side others • dress up and act out roles

TABLE 6A: FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING 0-3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE THINKING AND COMMUNICATING SELF ~ THINKING

Development, Skills & Attitudes

Children will have the opportunity to:

For babies:

- watch face
- follow moving objects with eyes
- recognise familiar people
- respond to and imitate facial expressions
- hold and shake rattle
- respond to simple directions
- put small objects in and out of containers
- search for objects no longer visible
- hit objects together and drop them
- match objects

For toddlers:

- recognise familiar people
- respond to and imitate facial expression
- respond to simple directions
- put small objects in and out of containers
- match objects
- name objects
- ask questions
- accomplish own learning through practice, experimenting and exploring
- know name of family members and other children
- choose associated objects meaningful (eg bucket/spade)
- select and look at picture books, listen to stories
- describe own actions
- use props in play (symbolic play) (eg cups and saucers, use blocks as telephone)
- understand uses of objects and body parts
- participate in activities with others (eg shared book)
- use representational objects (eg dolls, teddies, stuffed animals) in their play
- demonstrate book knowledge, front, back, picture, print, page turning

For 2 - 3 year olds:

- name objects
- ask questions
- accomplish own learning through practice, experimenting, exploring
- know names of family members and other children
- choose associated objects meaningfully (eg bucket/spade)
- select and look at picture books, listen to stories
- describe own actions
- use props in play (symbolic play) (eg cups/saucers, use blocks as telephone)
- imitate actions from memory
- understand and use objects and body parts
- recall events from recent past
- use make-believe play, begin to role play
- begin to understand basic concepts - more, no more, big/small
- participate in activities with others (eg shared book)
- use puppets in imaginative ways
- use representational objects (eg dolls, teddies, stuffed animals) in their play

Role of the Early Childhood Educator

The Early Childhood Educator will:

- provide an environment and time/space for curiosity, exploration, experimentation and practice
- provide an environment which encourages children to question and support them in seeking answers
- provide opportunities for sensory exploration (eg taste, touch, smell, look, listen)
- support children to develop skills to solve problems
- present children with alternatives
- provide an aesthetically pleasing environment with texture, colours, sounds, lighting and natural materials
- observe, record and interpret children's learning, development, dispositions and interests
- give children personal space and time
- provide opportunities for children to initiate and develop play and ideas without direct adult intervention or before offering adult support
- know when and how to intervene in children's play
- scaffold children's understanding by asking questions to help children solve problems
- provide opportunities for children to classify, sort and sequence objects (eg help set table)
- provide opportunites for children to explore and create patterns (auditory and visual)
- provide opportunities for children to see cause and effect relationships
- will encourage children to make decisions and make choices
- encourage children to verbalize their thoughts and refine their logic
- plan experiences that build on each child's actions and interests

Best Practice

Children will have the opportunity to experience:

- time and space and resources to explore, experiment, discover and manipulate
- early childhood educators who are sensitive to and foster their individual and changing interests
- repeated opportunities to practise developing skills and understandings
- a climate for positive interactions that encourages children to 'have a go'

Outcomes for Children

Children will:

1. **Begin to use representation in many forms**
2. **Begin to demonstrate independent thought, initiate and make choices**
3. **Begin to demonstrate logical thought, problem solving, cause and effect, and a curiosity about patterns and relationships and the connections between them**
4. **Begin to demonstrate abstract thought**
5. **Begin to demonstrate creative thought (eg. music)**
6. **Engage in imaginary play**

Indicators

Outcome 1: Children begin to use representation when they

- use purposeful gestures
- use a range of symbolic codes, scribbling, drawing
- recognise some common environmental symbols, numbers, letters (not necessarily in sequence)
- use objects to represent other objects
- engage in first imitative play including imitation of adult tasks, especially care taking and housekeeping tasks
- like being read to and looking at picture books
- recognise pictures of common objects
- engage in imaginative fantasy play, continued interest in care taking and housekeeping
- take a high interest in dramatic play, recreates adult occupations, uses objects, costumes/props, increased interest in group pretend play
- begin to build structures (eg blocks, boxes Lego)
- recognise differences in scale between toy and real life objects (eg toy car, doll's house)

Outcome 2: Children begin to demonstrate independent thought when they

- initiate
- make choices / decisions
- focus on task
- choose to co-operate or not
- able to plan and carry out a sequence to complete a task

Outcome 3: Children begin to demonstrate logical thought when they

- follow simple, developmentally appropriate instructions
- group objects that are similar (eg matching posting box, sounds) sorting/ordering
- experiment with cause/effect, recognise connection between own action and result
- discriminate - show preferences & recognise differences - same/different, according to texture, colour, size, shape, function
- hypothesise (guess)
- experiment to find answers, use of trial and error, willingness to persevere
- work out solutions for own problems
- show interest in and play with patterns
- copy simple patterns (eg. clap, clap, sand, shells in line, no stencils!)
- understand sequence of a task and complete it
- complete simple puzzles

Outcome 4: Children begin to demonstrate abstract thought when they

- search for hidden objects
- anticipate events and demonstrate a developing sense of time
- have a beginning sense of fear
- help return objects to their place

Outcome 5: Children begin to demonstrate creative thought when they

- are curious and explore and use environment
- use all senses to explore environment
- have a developing sense of fun
- use ideas and objects imaginatively
- respond to music, art, drama in their own way
- create own music, vocabulary, performances, art
- explore different ways of moving body
- participate in imaginary play alone or in small groups
- experience and use a range of materials in innovative ways
- modify ideas and resources provided
- initiate their own activity from ideas and resources
- suggest creative solutions to everyday problems

Outcome6: Children engage in imaginary play when they

- act out rhymes, finger plays
- dress up, use props
- imitate
- role play
- use objects to represent other objects
- use puppets

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